

NIFA in the News – Week of May13, 2013

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In the News

Studying effects of weather and climate on cattle (MagicValley.com 5/12). USDA awarded \$19.5 million to support research education and extension activities associated with climate solutions in agriculture aimed at the impacts of climate variability and change on dairy and beef cattle. The University of Wisconsin is partnering in the project with the University of Arkansas, Cornell University, the University of Michigan, North Carolina A&T University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Washington, along with four USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) laboratories, the U.S. Department of Energy and the industry-sponsored Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. [Link](#)

Oilseed crops a good habitat for pollinators (AgriNews 5/13). The oilseed crop plots at the USDA-ARS North Central Soil Conservation Lab's Swan Lake Research Farm are alive in more ways than one. Researchers at the Morris-based lab are not only seeing good plant development, they also see and hear bees and other insects at work pollinating the crops. The Soils Lab is working in conjunction with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and other ARS labs and universities on mustard plant varieties. The research will detail how the plants fare in different soils and growing conditions and which will be best suited as a biofuel feedstock. [Link](#)

USDA research efforts need management improvements: GAO (FCW 5/14). The United States Department of Agriculture's two principal research agencies need to strengthen collaborative planning and reduce duplication in the face of increasingly tight budgets, according to a Government Accountability Office study released in April. The study was the culmination of a lengthy investigation into USDA's internal and external research agencies – the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), respectively – which both play critical roles in supporting agricultural science and human nutrition. [Link](#)

Beginning farmer program registration is underway (Richmond Register 5/14). The Madison and Garrard County Cooperative Extension Offices will be offering a

beginning farmer program called KyFarmStart this fall. KyFarmStart is a comprehensive whole-farm management education program designed for beginning farmers (farming less than 10 years as a primary operator), as well as those considering a future in farming. KyFarmStart is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer Rancher Program. [Link](#)

Area researchers receive USDA grant to develop solutions to beef cattle concerns (Southwest Farm Press 5/14). A team of Southern Great Plains scientists and educators will receive \$9.6 million over five years to improve understanding of the vulnerability and resilience of beef production in an environment of increased climate variability, dynamic land-use and fluctuating markets. The team is comprised of 32 scientists from Oklahoma State University, the University of Oklahoma, Kansas State University, Tarleton State University, the Samuel R. Noble Foundation and U.S. Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Research Service laboratories in El Reno, Oklahoma, and Bushland, Texas. Funding is being provided through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, part of \$19.5 million NIFA is making available to various scientific teams nationally to support the development of climate solutions relative to beef and dairy cattle. [Link](#)

USDA funds research to study the effects of weather variability on cattle (Farm and Dairy 5/14). The University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wis., received \$9.9 million over five years to study the environmental impact of various dairy production systems and develop best management practices for the farm level. The University of Wisconsin is partnering in the project with the University of Arkansas, Cornell University, the University of Michigan, North Carolina A&T University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Washington, along with four USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) laboratories, the U.S. Department of Energy and the industry-sponsored Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. [Link](#)

Plant Science Already Feeling Sequester's Pain (Biofortified Blog 5/15). The sweeping cuts in federal spending known as the sequester are already taking a toll on scientific research. The outlook for basic plant research is bleak, but applied plant research faces even more difficult times. The ARS, which is the USDA's internal research arm, and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which administers the USDA's external funding, support most of the applied plant science research in the US. According to the AAAS, the sequester is sending USDA R&D funding back to 1998 levels. [Link](#)

K-State scientists to study cattle grazing (The Wichita Eagle 5/15). Scientists at Kansas State University will take part in a \$9.6 million grant-funded study to research how to continue successful cattle grazing in spite of future climate changes, the university said in a statement released this week. The university said the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced the five-year grant to a multi-state group that includes Kansas State, Oklahoma State, the University of Oklahoma and others. Researchers will study how cattle producers can adapt to future episodes of drought, flooding, extreme heat, subzero temperatures, the university said. [Link](#)

No smoking gun found as cause of honeybee decline and die-offs (Southwest Farm Press 5/16). A joint USDA/EPA report addressing the continuing mass die-offs of honeybees points to a wide range of causes. Those include parasites, disease, genetics, poor nutrition and pesticide exposure. Last October, experts from around the country gathered to assess the state of the science of honeybee health. The report is “the outcome of that conference,” said Sonny Ramaswamy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, during a Thursday (May 2) press conference. “In many ways it’s a landmark report ... and represents the consensus of the scientific community on the challenges our honeybee populations are facing.”
[Link](#)

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